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HISTORY  
OF  
MOUNT KISCO.

BY  
E CLARENCE HYATT.

1893

copy

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By E. CLARENCE HYATT.

## NOTE

In preparing this work for publication it has been the aim of the author to give only matters of general interest and worthy the attention of the reader, and he has endeavored to be strictly accurate as to dates, thereby making the book desirable to have at hand for future reference.

For many of the facts connected with the early history of Mount Kisco he is indebted to Mr. HENRY WOOL and Mr. J. S. HALL.

# ILLUSTRATIONS.

MOUNT KISCO.

MOUNT KISCO DEPOT AND FRENCH'S HOTEL.

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

THE METHODIST CHURCH.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH..

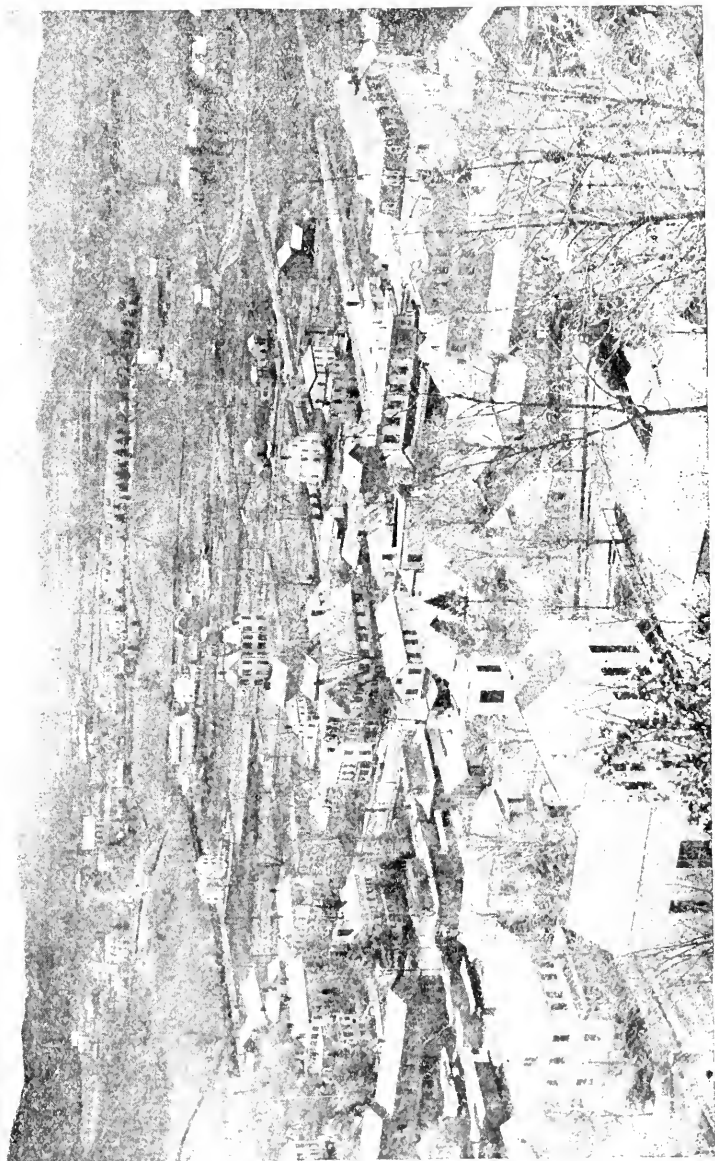
THE PUBLIC SCHOOL.

MOUNT KISCO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE.



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MOUNT KISCO,

# MOUNT KISCO.

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## ORIGIN OF NAME KISCO.

The name Kisco is an Indian word, the particular meaning of which has never yet been ascertained. Its similarity to the Indian name Kiskatamenahook, meaning a brook, but originally of some locality by a brook, \* may account for the name Kisco being applied to this locality, there having been, it is said, an Indian village along Kisco river.

In 1762 a road was laid out in Kisco mountains. †

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## WHY THE PLACE WAS CALLED MOUNT KISCO.

A mountain spur and a brook near by had been for many years called Kisco. On the completion of the Harlem railroad to this place in the early Spring of 1847, the station was called New Castle, and for several years thereafter was known by no other name, although the station was wholly in the town of Bedford. The name given the station by the railroad officials was considered peculiarly inappropriate by the inhabitants of the place, who, in accordance with due notice given, assembled in front of J. S. Hall's, the then depot house, in 1850, choose Henry Wood chairman, and proceeded to vote upon a name for the new village growing up around the railroad station.‡

The name Kisco Valley had been proposed. The chairman sug-

\* Trumbull's History of Conn.

† Record of Highways in County Clerk's office.

‡ This meeting was called at the suggestion of the then president of the road and was in response to the efforts made by Stephen Wood and his son Henry to have the name of the station changed.

gested Kisco. The late Stephen Wood, sr., said "why not call it Mount Kisco?" This last proposition was heartily endorsed by the late Capt. J. W. Merritt, and the name Mount Kisco was adopted by an almost unanimous vote. The R. R. tickets were soon after this changed from New Castle to Mount Kisco.

In December of the same year the Mount Kisco post office was established, and James S. Hall appointed postmaster.

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### **A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.**

There were only a few farms and farm houses, one grist mill, one fulling mill, one store, one tavern and one church within the corporate limits of Mount Kisco one hundred years ago. The land owners were Seeley Sarles, John Israels, Gilbert Green, Thomas Green, Caleb Kirby and Sutton Craft. There was only one house where is now the R. R. station. It was a small house, standing about midway between the depot house and Dr. Miller's. Kirby's pond furnished water power for the mills. The present Main street was the principal roadway. The sand bank at the station extended to the highway and across the R. R. track. At New Castle corner were St. George's church and Craft's tavern.

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### **NEW CASTLE CORNER.**

Here, for many years, was the only store and the only post office within a circuit of five miles. It was a small hamlet delightfully situated on somewhat elevated ground on the north and west sides of Kirby's pond. It is only a small part of an extensive area of a comparatively smooth surface spreading out from the lowlands about the railroad station far to the southward and skirting the Mill street road for a considerable distance, where are fine farms, palatial residences,

spacious barns, all denoting thrift and prosperity.

In 1722, it was a new settlement in the woods.

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### KIRBYVILLE.

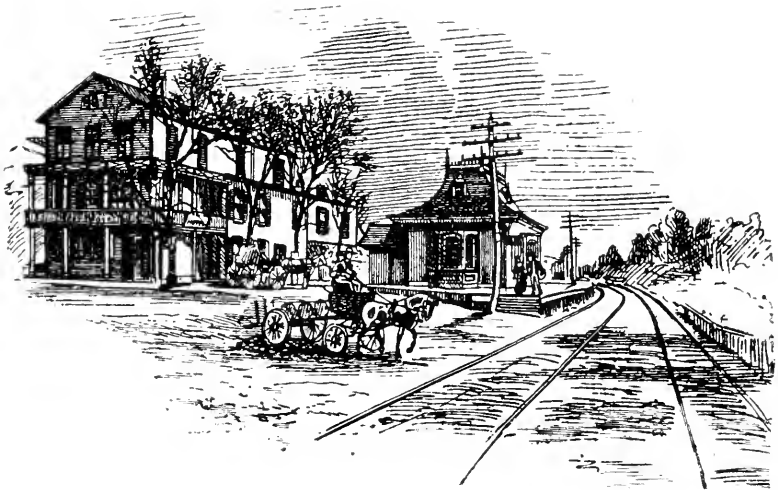
A little farther down Mill street road from New Castle Corner is Kirbyville, the former home of the Kirbys,—Caleb Kirby and his descendants. Here have been several mills and factories. Caleb Kirby lived in the house now occupied by Mr. J. K. Vail. The march of progress and improvement have left unremoved a rock on the lawn in front of this house. On this rock, it is said, Gen'l Washington once ate his dinner during a temporary halt in the march of the patriot army through this place. By the junction here of the Mill street and Wampus pond roads, is formed a triangular space serving as a sort of park, opposite which stands the district school house and several dwelling houses.

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### THE RAILWAY.

In the latter part of the year 1845 the Harlem R. R. Co., in the extension of its line of railway through Westchester County, began the construction of their road along the low-lands skirting the broken and irregular line of Chappaqua hills and by Kisco mountain, and in the early part of the spring of 1847, the cars were running as far as Mount Kisco.

There were at first four passenger trains daily,—fare 75 cents to New York. The first appearance of a locomotive in the immediate vicinity of Mount Kisco was in the latter part of the winter of 1846 and 7, when the track was being laid on the newly graded road. People living along the line of the road flocked to the adjoining hills to see the locomotive and cars go by, and on the arrival of incoming trains a crowd of persons were waiting at the station to see the “iron horse.”



MOUNT KISCO DEPOT AND FRENCH'S HOTEL.

Mount Kisco was the upper terminus of the road until the following June when trains began running to Croton Falls.

The first train of cars that came to Mount Kisco, consisted of some freight and milk cars and one passenger car. This was in February, 1847.

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## MOUNT KISCO'S GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

It was not until the completion of the railroad to this place that the growth and development of Mount Kisco as a business centre commenced.

Houses, stores, churches, hotels and factories were built, new streets opened and farms divided up into building lots. The first building erected was the Captain Merritt store house, where is now the post office, and the first dwelling house that of Smith Hall now B. C. Tompkin's, the office of E. T. Baily & Son, real estate and insurance agents. This dwelling was completed in the spring of 1847. Briggs' hotel was built in 1851. The large building now used for Ga Nun & Co's. store was built for Isaac Carpenter very soon after the completion of the railroad to this place, and the third floor was used for a number of years as a ball room.

The Mount Kisco Educational Institute was erected in 1856 Strang's hotel in 1858; the Frank Halstead store house, corner of Main street and Maple avenue, in 1869; the Spencer Optical factory in 1873, and re-built in 1877; the Opera House was built in 1884-5, and opened in February 1885 as a skating rink.

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## INCORPORATION.

At an election held in the old Captain Merritt store house corner of Main street and Kisco avenue, June 1st, 1875, to vote on incorporating the village, the result was 144 majority vote in favor of village incorporation.

The first Board of Trustees consisted of Alfred A. Sutton, president; Chancy Smith, Charles Van Tassel, William Banks and Andrew G. Carpenter, trustees. Succeeding presidents have been Jackson Hyatt, J. O. Miller, W. I. Halstead, A. L. Banks and Theodore Carpenter.

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### LOCATION AND ADVANTAGES.

The village lies partly in the town of Bedford and partly in the town of New Castle. Within the village boundaries are Kisco mountain, New Castle Corner and Kirbyville. Its diversified scenery, its beautiful drives in every direction, its high elevation above the sea level, its pure bracing air, make it a very desirable place for residence. The death rate, during the last fifteen years has averaged only fifteen persons each year, about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the entire population. The average age of those who have died was fifty-three years.

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### DESCRIPTION.

Its surface is diversified with hill and dale, mountain and plain. The railway passes in a north-easterly direction through the place, and two streams of considerable size, the Kisco and Branch brook, are within its borders. Main street, the principal thoroughfare and along which are nearly all the business places and churches, forms an irregular semi-circle in its course through the village. Kisco mountain looms up several hundred feet, with steep precipitous side of rocks and forest trees and slopes off westward with gentle declivity to the valley of the Kisco.

---

### KIRBY'S POND.

In the early settlement of the country it was found that here was an excellent place for a mill site, and a dam was accordingly built.



which remained until swept away in a great freshet the 29th of April, 1854. The pond had hitherto covered fifty-five acres, but the new dam soon after built caused the pond to cover seventy-five acres, and this dam remained until its owner, Judge Leonard, had it torn down December 4th, 1888, and the pond thoroughly drained. Robert Flewelling was owner of the pond and mill property until 1791, when Caleb Kirby became owner.

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## FIRE DEPARTMENT.

This was organized in 1878, with four fire companies, two hand fire engines, one hose carriage and one hook and ladder truck. To these have since been added a small "jumper" hand engine. Ira Ellis was chief.

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## LYCEUM.

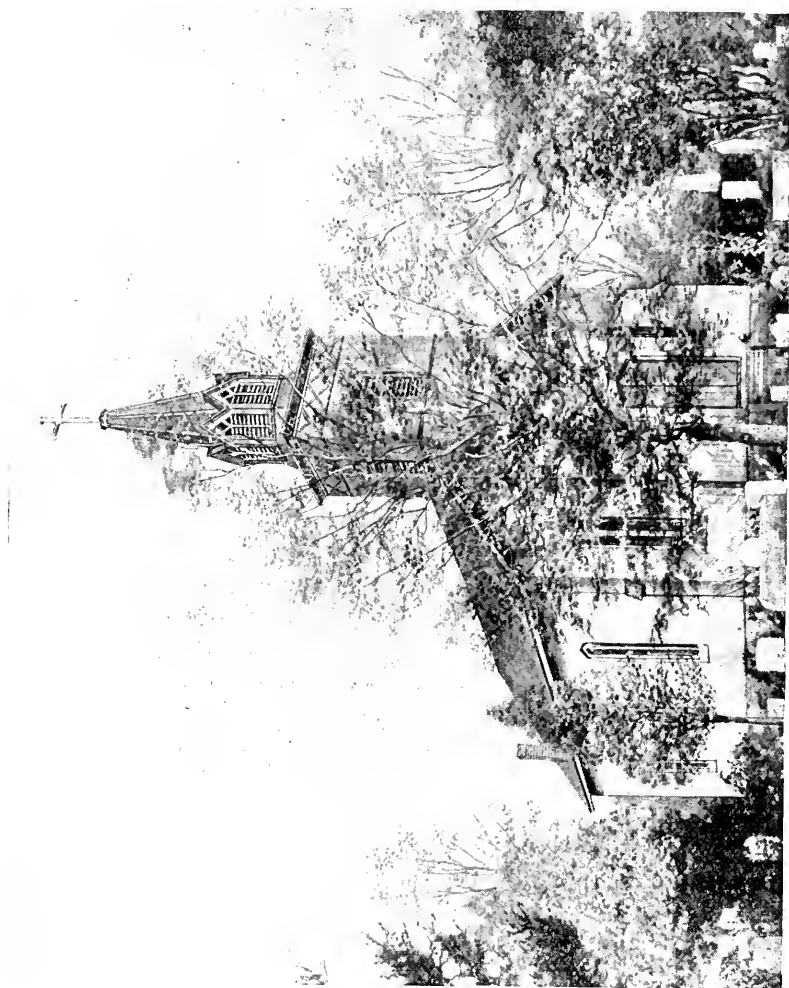
Organized 1881 with eight-hundred miscellaneous books, mostly standard works. A reading room was opened and supplied with newspapers and magazines.

The reading room has been discontinued, and the library placed in the jewelry store of F. T. Jelliff.

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## FIRES.

Optical Factory . . . . .	burned April 21, 1877
Smith's Wheelwright Shop . . . . .	" March 7, 1878
House of Chancy Smith . . . . .	" Oct. 19, 1879
Carriage House of E. Dauchy . . . . .	" Jan. 5, 1881
Barn of Dr. Witherell . . . . .	" Oct. 22, 1886
St. Francis R. C. Church . . . . .	" Nov. 26, 1886
Mount Kisco Hotel . . . . .	" Mar. 30, 1887



ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

Barn of E. E. Dingee . . . . .	burned June 29, 1890
“ P. Fitzgerald . . . . .	“ Mar. 13, 1892
“ Judge Leonard . . . . .	“ “ 31, 1892
“ Stephen Malone . . . . .	“ “ 14, 1892
Piersall Tenant House . . . . .	“ April 6, 1892

## CHURCHES.

### ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

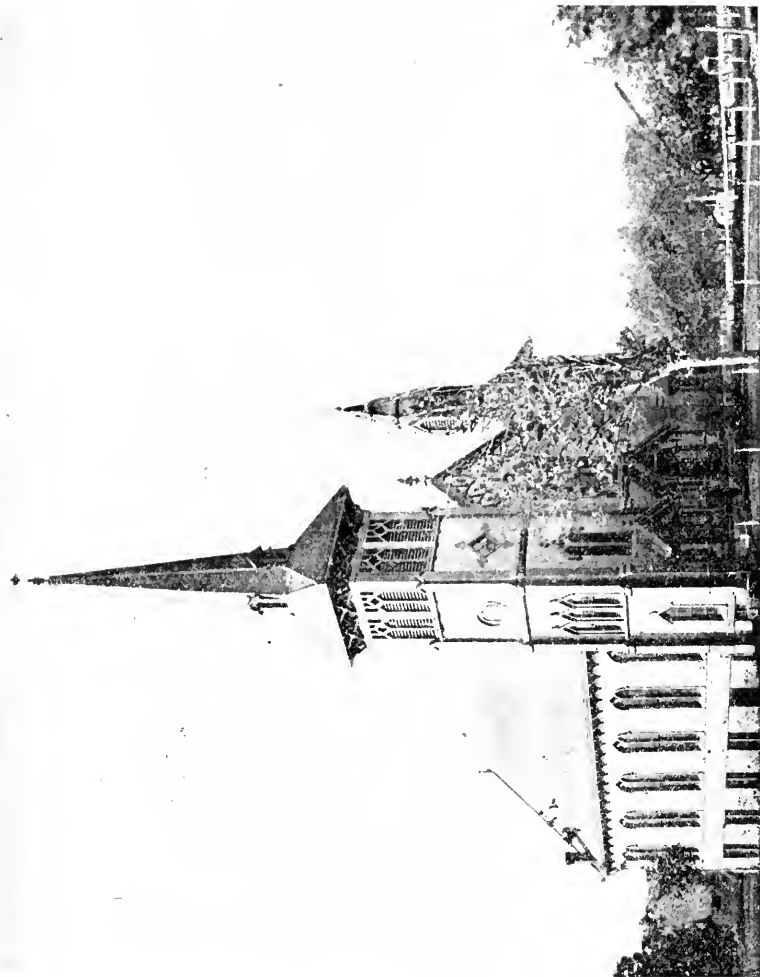
This church, built in 1851 and dedicated January 25th, 1852, stands a short distance to the rear of the former site of St. George's church, built in 1761 and removed in 1839 and turned into a barn. The old church was used as a hospital in the time of the Revolution.

The parsonage was given the society by will of the late Thomas Wright. The church has a seating capacity of 150, and a membership of 126.

The pastors in charge were : —

Isaac D. Vermilyea . . . . .	1852 to 1858
William L. Peck . . . . .	1858 to 1863
Joseph W. Hyde . . . . .	1863 to 1867
Charles W. Bolton . . . . .	1867 to 1872
James W. Sparks . . . . .	1872 to 1874
Joseph H. Young . . . . .	1874 to 1876
Charles B. Mee . . . . .	1876 to 1880
John Anketell . . . . .	1880 to 1882
Benj. T. Hall . . . . .	1882 to 1887
Walter Mitchell . . . . .	1887 to 1889
Epiphinaus Wilson . . . . .	1889 to

The present church stands in the centre of a burying ground in the southern part of which were buried, in the time of the Revolution, a number of soldiers belonging to the Continental army who died in the church, then used as a hospital. Some of the headstones bear



NEW CASTLE METHODIST CHURCH.

mark of great age. On one is inscribed : "In memory of Isaac Lounsberry, who was born October 11th, 1703, and died March 3d, 1773."

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## NEW CASTLE METHODIST CHURCH.

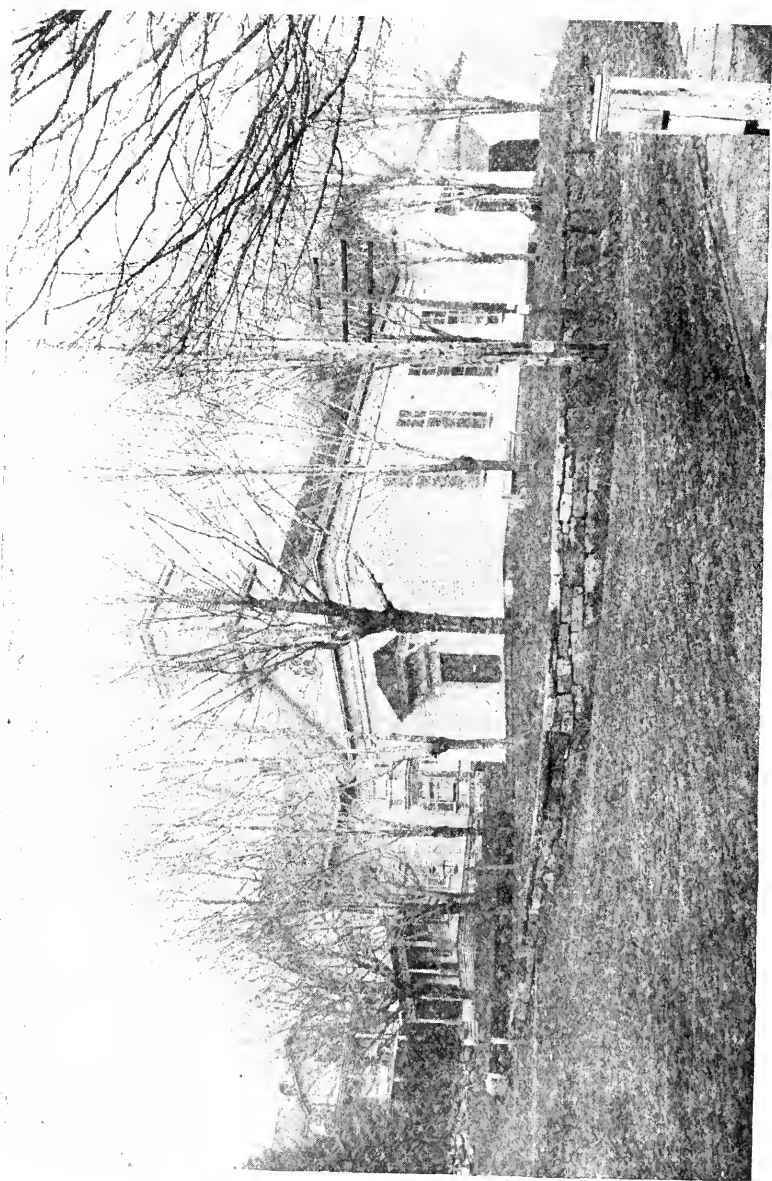
The building of the first Methodist Church in 1826 at New Castle Corner was an outgrowth of a season of revival meetings held there at the houses of members of the North Castle Methodist church. Its first Board of Trustees were Caleb Kirby, James Fish, John P. Horton, Tyler Fountain and Benj. Kirby. It was included within the Bedford circuit, having ten preaching places.

The preachers were as follows : —

Horace Bartlett and Stephen Farrington . . . . .	1826
Horace Bartlett and Luman Andrus . . . . .	1827
Nicholas White and Luman Andrus . . . . .	1828
Nicholas White and Henry Hatfield . . . . .	1829
Noble W. Thomas and Henry Hatfield . . . . .	1830
Noble W. Thomas and John Reynolds . . . . .	1831
John Reynolds and Daniel Devinne . . . . .	1832
Henry Hatfield and Denton Keeler . . . . .	1833
Loren Clark and Denton Keeler . . . . .	1834
Loren Clark and Alonzo F. Silleck . . . . .	1835
Geo. L. Fuller and Alonzo F. Silleck . . . . .	1836
Seymour Van Dusen and Wm. H. Bangs . . . . .	1837
Nathan Rice and Wm. H. Bangs . . . . .	1838
Robert Travis and J. L. Dickerson . . . . .	1839-40
Jesse Hunt and James H. Romer . . . . .	1841-42

Up to this time ( 1843 ) the society had increased sufficiently in membership to warrant the building of a larger church edifice, which was accordingly built a little farther south and west than the first church, and dedicated February 1843.

The old church was thereafter used as a parsonage.



MT. KISCO PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

The preachers were :—

Charles F. Pelton and J. K. Sill . . .	1843
Chas. F. Pelton and D. Turner . . .	1844
Daniel Devinne . . . . .	1845-46
John Luckey . . . . .	1847-48
J. Z. Nichols . . . . .	1849
Thomas Sparks . . . . .	1850-51
Davis Stocking . . . . .	1852-53
Benjamin Griffin . . . . .	1854-55
C. S. Brown . . . . .	1856-57
Thomas Lodge . . . . .	1858-59
David Buck . . . . .	1860-61
Albert D. Vail . . . . .	1862-63
E. Foster . . . . .	1864
Thomas Fero . . . . .	1865
Jeremiah Millard . . . . .	1866-67-68

From 1845 to 1856 it was connected with the Pines Bridge church.

The year 1868 was the beginning of a new era in the history of the New Castle Methodist church both as to change of location and of a new and much larger house of worship.

At a cost of about \$25,000, a church and parsonage were erected on grounds bought of Hezekiah D. Raymond, and the church was dedicated August 20th, 1868. The old church property was sold Jan<sup>y</sup> 18th, 1868. The new church is much nearer the R. R. depot than was the old one, much finer in appearance, having two towers, one ninety the other forty feet in height. In the higher tower is a bell weighing eighteen-hundred pounds. The church has a seating capacity of five-hundred, and a membership of about two-hundred and seventy.

Its preachers were :—

J. Millard . . . . .	1868
De Los Lull . . . . .	1869-70
J. F. Richmond . . . . .	1871-72
C. M. Eggleston . . . . .	1873-74
J. W. Ackerly . . . . .	1875-77

S. J. Ferguson . . . . .	1878-79
W. E. Ketcham . . . . .	1880-82
George Clark . . . . .	1883-85
G. W. Terbush . . . . .	1886-87
De Los Lull . . . . .	1888-90
W. A. Chadwick . . . . .	1891-94

A new \$2500 pipe organ of Jardine & Sons' make has just been placed in the recess back of the pulpit. This organ has two manuals, twenty-two registers and 943 pipes. Mrs. Frank Miller is organist.

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### THE MOUNT KISCO PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

The church edifice was erected in 1851 on grounds given by Joseph W. Merritt. It is a plain building with a short tower or cupola, a bell and stained glass windows, and has a seating capacity of two-hundred and fifty. The main entrance is through a wide doorway opening into a lobby at the south end of the church, a door at each end of the lobby opens into the large audience room, back of which is the lecture room used for Sunday school and prayer meeting, just back of the pulpit is a pipe organ. A place for the choir is arranged between the pulpit and organ.

A new parsonage was built in 1882 on a part of the church grounds where the horse sheds formerly stood and these were removed to the rear of the church. The church has a membership of one hundred and thirty six.

The preachers were : —

Andrew Shiland . . . . .	1852-69
John Hancock . . . . .	1869-74
John H. Frazee . . . . .	1874-77
John Johnson . . . . .	1877-82
Addison Madiera . . . . .	1882-86
Harris R. Schenck . . . . .	1886-92
David Laughlin . . . . .	1892



A new \$1400 pipe organ of Jardine & Sons' make has recently been put into the church. This organ has two manuals, fourteen registers and five-hundred and fifty pipes. Miss Florence Lyon is organist.

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### ST. FRANCIS ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

Father McGean of Sing Sing was the first Catholic priest to conduct services in Mount Kisco. This was in 1861. The nearest Roman Catholic church was at Croton Falls. It was a long distance for members of this society at Mount Kisco to go in attending their own church. Efforts were consequently made to have a church of their own at Mount Kisco, and a church was accordingly built in 1862 at the junction of Main and Green streets, costing about \$2,500, and in 1872 a parsonage was built costing about \$3,500.

The church was burned on the night of Nov. 29th, 1886, and in the following year a larger and handsomer edifice was erected on the same site, and dedicated February 19th, 1888.

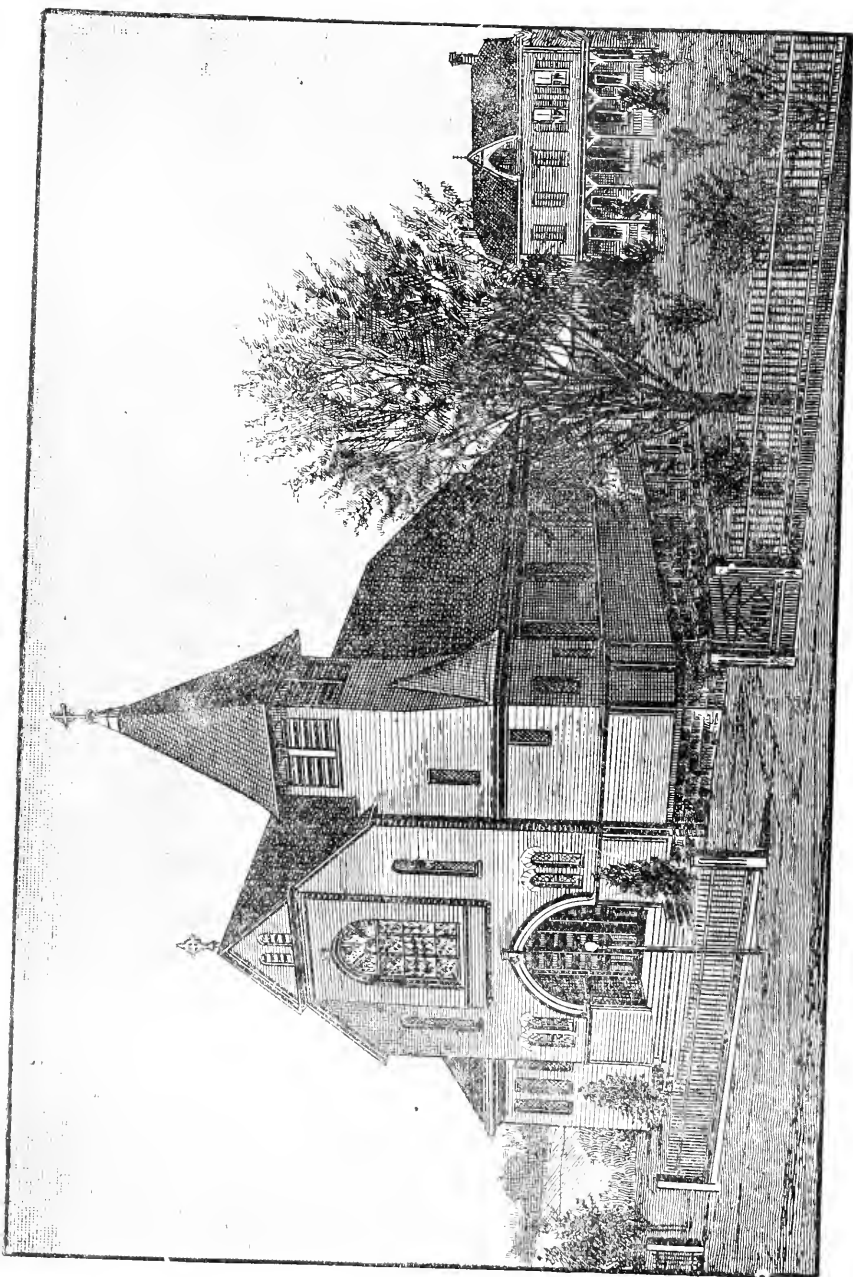
The church has a seating capacity of two-hundred and twenty, and a membership of two-hundred and fifty. The first pastor was Father McClellan of Sing Sing. The first resident pastor was Father Brennan. The pastors succeeding him were:—

Father Henry	Father Newman
“ McCauley	“ Conroy
“ Gregg	“ Wall

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### MEETING HOUSE OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

This building for divine worship was erected in 1856. It is situate on a ridge of land just east of the R. R. depot. The main entrance is at the south end of the building and it has a seating capac-



ST. FRANCIS ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

ity of about one hundred and fifty, and has a neat, unpretentious appearance. Public services are held every Sunday and Wednesday mornings and a Sunday school at the close of the Sunday morning service.

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### NEWSPAPERS.

The *Mount Kisco Weekly*, the first newspaper ever published in Mount Kisco made its first appearance in August 1873, under the auspices of the Carpenter Bros., (Stephen and Samuel) who, for several years previous to this, had at their own home, been carrying on a job printing business, doing their printing on a small hand printing press. This weekly newspaper met a growing demand that hitherto had been supplied by the Sing Sing papers, and a Yonkers paper.

The *Mount Kisco Weekly* came out every Friday evening and was edited in succession by the Carpenter Bros, B. Hammond, C. E. Travis, Wm. T. Cole and Chas. E. Patteson and was by the last named removed to White Plains in 1887, and published under the name of "*Mount Kisco Weekly and Westchester County Reporter*."

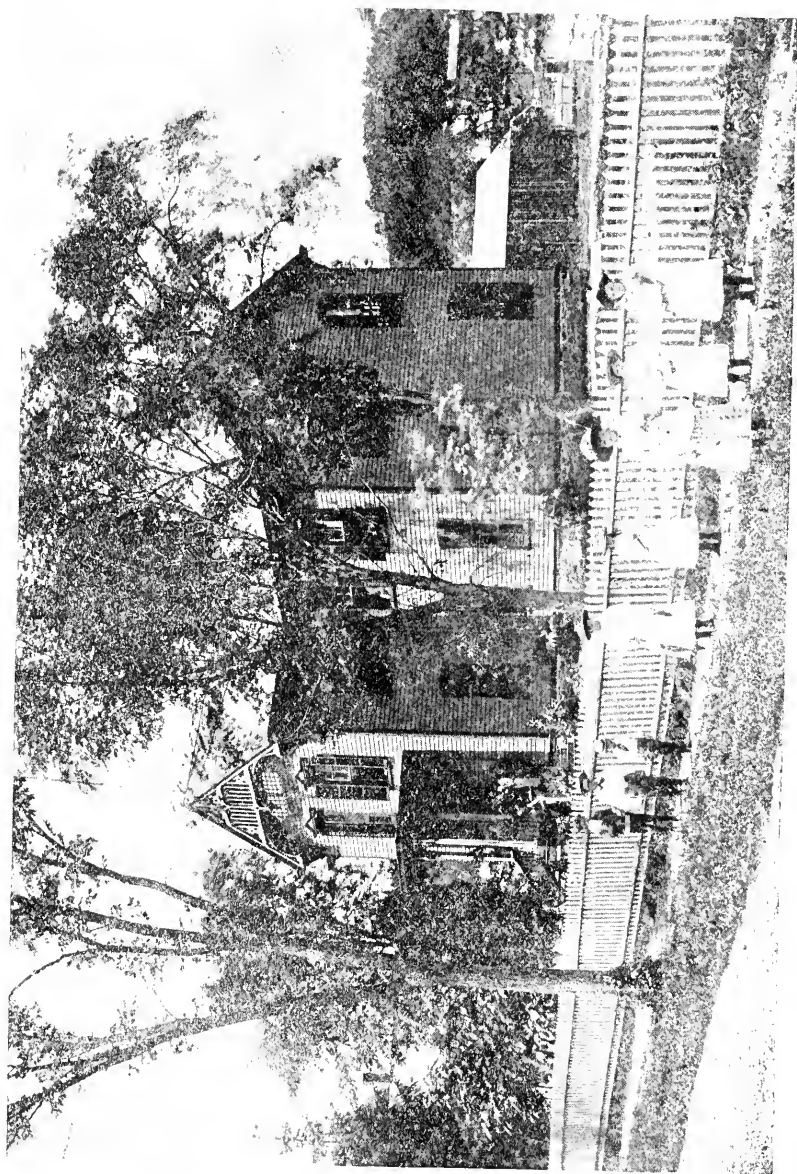
The *Recorder*, as a Mount Kisco publication, made its first appearance in Mount Kisco in the year 1881 and was edited by the late Wm. A. Miller. It had been published under the name of "*The Katonah Sentinel*," at Katonah since 1873. Frank Dromgoole, the present editor, purchased the paper in 1882, and he has conducted it with ability and success ever since, and as an influential Republican organ has always had the confidence and liberal support of its party.

This paper is issued every Friday evening.

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### SCHOOLS.

The first school in Mount Kisco was opened in the basement of Smith Hall's house in 1849, and was called a neighborhood school. It was well attended and showed the necessity of having a school



UNION FREE SCHOOL.

house at the station. The district school house was built in 1851 and stood on the highest part of the sand knoll and is now used as Mathew's wheelwright shop. Twenty years afterwards, the necessity of providing much larger accommodations for children of school age in the district became clearly apparent, and to meet the pressing needs in this respect the Union Free School building was erected in 1875, at a cost of \$6,500 on land bought of David Moger. The building is two story and has a cupola in which is a bell weighing three hundred pounds. There are two rooms on the first floor and two rooms connected by large sliding doors on second floor. Each room is heated by steam. The school can accommodate one hundred and eighty pupils. There was an average daily attendance of one hundred and forty-one, during the last school year, 1891-2, and one hundred and ninety-one enrolled. The number of non-resident pupils in attendance has reached as high as thirty-seven. It is a graded school with four departments: primary, junior, senior and grammar, each having a teacher. The first principal was Mr. Anderson, his successors in order of time have been Mr. Bishop, Mr. Brickell, Mr. Crane, Mr. Millar and Miss Norris who is the present principal. She has initiated a movement which resulted in the collection of several hundred books forming the nucleus of a good library for the use of the school.

The Board of Education consists of Messrs. E. T. Baily, C. S. Ware, M. Lissauer, C. Dawson and F. Dromgoole.

A small school house at Kirbyville accommodates the school at the south end of the village.

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## SOCIETIES.

Kisco Lodge, No. 708, F. & A. M. was organized September 7 1870, and its charter received July 12 1871. Lewis F. Pelton was its first master. The lodge has eighty six members. They meet in Masonic Hall on Main Street at the head of Maple ave, two Friday

evenings of each month. The present officers are:—

D. F. Gorham . . . . .	<i>Master</i>
F. C. Pelton . . . . .	<i>Secretary</i>
S. H. Sarles . . . . .	<i>Senior Warden</i>
A. J. Eaves, . . . . .	<i>Junior Warden.</i>
H. W. Bischoff, . . . . .	<i>Treasurer.</i>

Pearl Fountain Lodge, No. 42, I. O. of G. T., was organized in February, 1891. It has 50 members. George Finch is Chief. Meetings are held every Monday evening in the lodge rooms in Betts. building on Main street.

The Woman's Christian Union was organized in January, 1880, with 14 members. Its first officers were Emily Fowler, president; Jane Knapp, treasurer; Fannie Fish, secretary. It now has a membership of between 50 and 60. Mrs. Fowler is president; Mrs Knapp, treasurer, and Mrs. Ella Weeks, secretary. Meetings are held at the houses of members.

The John Wesley Mission was organized as an auxilliary of the New Castle Methodist Church, January 1891. Meetings are held every Sunday afternoon, in the mission room on Main street, at the head of Maple avenue.

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## CEMETERY.

A tract of land, 85 acres, being a part of the Wright brothers farm, was set apart in 1871, by Chancy Smith, as a cemetery and named Oakwood. It adjoins Lexington avenue, and extends nearly to the railroad. The first interment, two of the Hubbell children, was made in 1872. The cemetery was incorporated in 1884, with James Wood as president, Doctor Teller, secretary and Francis M. Carpenter-treasurer. A receiving vault has been built in that part of the cemetery near the railway. John Crook is superintendents of the grounds.

### THE TOWN LINE.

The New Castle and Bedford town line passes through the village of Mount Kisco, with a curvature bowing into the town of New Castle. The only record evidence showing that this line is not a straight one, but that it is curved as above stated, is a tax map on file in the Secretary of State's office, Albany. This is a map of 4151 acres of land sold July 25, 1765, for non-payment of taxes, and the land so sold was in the south-western part of the town of Bedford, adjoining the town of New Castle. The line is in other respects traditional, there being no monuments to fix its course.

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### THE MT. KISCO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE.

This institute of learning was incorporated March 31, 1857. The building for the school was built the year previous on elevated ground about midway between New Castle Corner and Mount Kisco depot and used for a high school until 1865, and thereafter as a hotel and summer boarding house, until burned March 30, 1857. The building was seventy feet long, forty feet wide and three stories high, besides basement and had all the modern improvements. The grounds around it consisted of about five acres.

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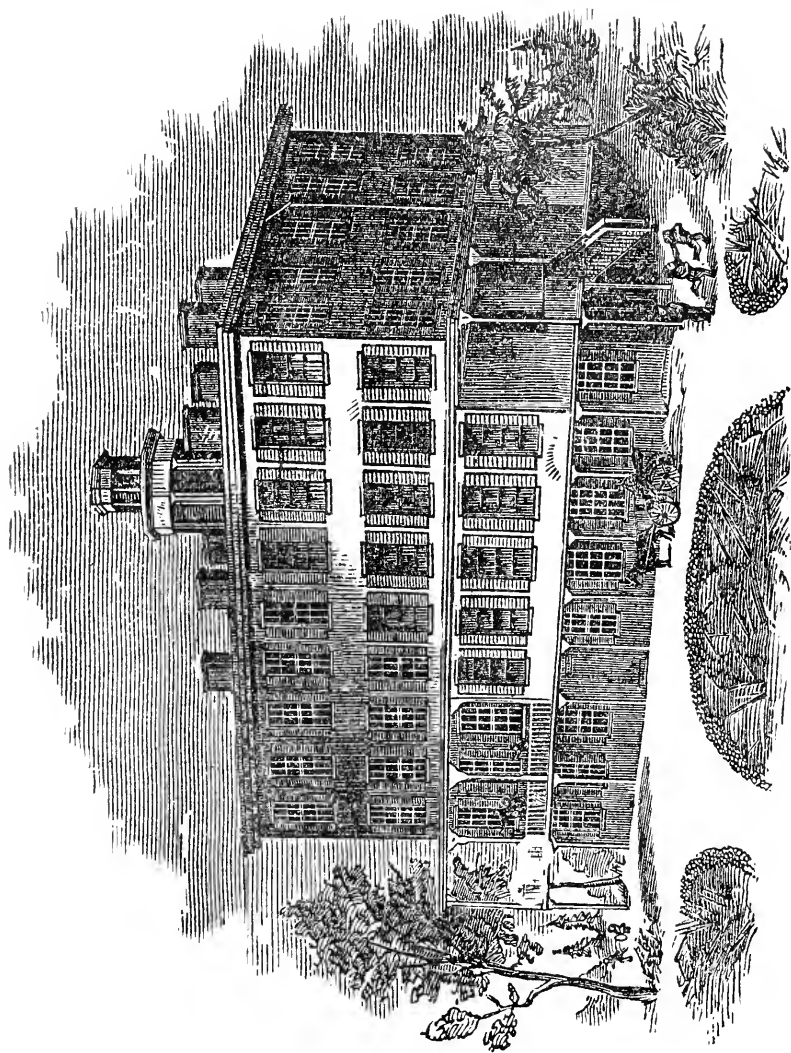
### POPULATION.

The number of inhabitants in the village of Mount Kisco, as shown by the State census taken in 1892, is about 1000.

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### VILLAGE OFFICERS.

J. O. Miller, President. A. L. Banks, E. T. Bailey and Boltis Moore, Trustees. Walter E. Osborn, Clerk; and J. H. Crane, Police Justice.



MOUNT KISCO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE.



# Carriage Repository,

BLACKSMITH SHOP AND

WHEELWRIGHT SHOP,

Whips, Blankets, Robes, &c.

KISCO AVENUE, near Presbyterian Church,

TOWNSEND MATHEWS, Proprietor.

AND PATENTEE

**Mathew's Road Cart.**

L. B. RICHARDS,

COAL AND WOOD

MOUNT KISCO, N. Y.

**STAGE LINE**

BETWEEN MT. KISCO DEPOT AND NEW  
CASTLE CORNER.

Stage meets every Train.

Fare Ten Cents.

**ABIJAH MERRITT, Prop.**

GENERAL TRUCKING promptly attended to.

Everybody knows that  
**W. R. PRICE**  
**SELLS BEST TEA**  
Very Reasonable,  
ALWAYS WAIT FOR THE WAGON,  
AND WE'LL ALL TAKE TEA.

---

**FISH BROS.**  
**Funeral Directors,**  
AND  
EMBALMERS.

**MOUNT KISCO, N. Y.**

---

**HOYT BROS.**  
DEALERS IN  
**Cabinet Furniture, Chairs, Etc.**  
CARPETS, OIL CLOTHS, MATTINGS, WALL PAPER, &c.

**Katonah, Westchester Co., N. Y.**

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**A. L. BANKS,**  
DEALER IN  
**GROCERIES AND PROVISIONS**  
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